MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS.
HELD THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25,
1913.

The first meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1914 was held in its office in the Lemon Building, 1729 New York avenue, NW., Washington, D. C., on Thursday, September 25, 1913. The following members were present:

Daniel C. French, Chairman:

Frederick Law Olmsted:

Thomas Hastings:

Charles Moore:

Peirce Anderson:

also Colonel Spencer Cosby, the Secretary and Executive Officer. Colonel Wm. W. Harts, U. S. A., who is to succeed Colonel Cosby as Secretary and Executive Officer of the Commission on October 1st, was also present for a short while and was introduced to the members.

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 9:25 A. M., and proceeded at once to the business before it.

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: The minutes of the last meeting, held on May 9th and 10th, were presented and approved.

2. LINCOLN MEMORIAL: Mr. Henry Bacon, architect of the Lincoln Memorial, appeared before the Commission and stated that the various bids submitted by construction companies for the erection of the Memorial had been canvassed and that it was found that

the Memorial, complete as planned, could be erected of the best Georgia marble; but that if Colorado-Yule marble were used, the retaining wall would have to be omitted. He stated that he considered it most desirable to have the Memorial built of the latter marble, and asked the approval of the Commission for the omission of the retaining wall. The Commission was of the opinion that the matter was one to be left to the judgment of the architect, but no formal action was taken.

The Commission also discussed at some length the proposed treatment of the landscape features in the vicinity of the Memorial but took no definite action.

3. BARRY MONUMENT: Mr. French reported that, at the request of the Barry Statue Commission, he had inspected the full-size clay model of the figure of Commodore Barry, and also the marble figure of Victory for the front of the pedestal, and recommended their acceptance. The Commission accepted Mr. French's recommendation and approved the two figures as stated.

4. MAINE MEMORIAL IN ARLINGTON CEMETERY: The Commission next considered the communication from the Secretary of War as to the propriety of granting the request of the Havana Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution to have the bronze memorial tablet which had formerly been affixed, at the instance of that Chapter, to the mast of the sunken battleship "Maine" when lying in Havana Harbor, reaffixed to that mast after

its erection in Arlington Cemetery. The Commission understood that it was not asked to express an opinion as to the propriety of affixing this tablet to the mast as a matter of sentiment. From the standpoint of the best artistic effect, however, they felt that it would be an injury to the memorial. They further concurred in the opinion of the architect, Mr. Nathan Wyeth, that the inscription on the tablet would clash with the inscription given the architect to form a part of the monument.

5. LETTER FROM ISTHMIAN CANAL COMMISSION: A letter from the local office of the Isthmian Canal Commission was brought to the notice of the Commission, calling attention to the fact that the design for the west breakwater light and fog signal in the Canal Zone, approved by the Commission of Fine Arts on April 4, 1913, was not adopted owing to its excessive cost and the lack of ~~the~~ room. Blueprints of the design which was adopted were inspected. The Commission felt there was nothing to be done in the matter, and ordered the letter filed.

6. LETTER FROM MR. WM. MORTON FULLERTON: The Commission next considered the request of Mr. Wm. Morton Fullerton, Special Commissioner of the City of Lyons, France, in behalf of a proposed International Urban Exhibition to be held there in 1914, for the active co-operation of the Commission in procuring an appropriation from Congress for sending the Park Commission Plans to that exhibition. The Commission felt that they could do

nothing officially in securing this appropriation, but the Chairman requested the members to give all possible assistance they could personally to Mr. Fullerton, as the object of the appropriation was a worthy one.

8. SENATE BILL 925: The request of the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia for the advice of the Commission upon the merits and the propriety of passage of Senate Bill 925 "Authorizing the preparation and submission to Congress of a plan for the gradual acquisition of parks and playgrounds in the District of Columbia" was next brought to the attention of the Commission. In this connection a reply made by Colonel Spencer Cosby, Officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, to a similar request was read, and, as the Commission decided that that reply covered the subject fully, they concurred in his report and directed that the Chairman of the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia be so informed.

9. MERIDIAN HILL PARK AND SITE FOR BUCHANAN MEMORIAL: The Commission next considered a sketch plan showing the proposed improvement of the lower portion of Meridian Hill park, presented by the landscape architect of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, and approved the proposed improvement as far as shown on the plan. They suggested, however, that the treatment shown be extended so as to include a statue of President Buchanan in the lower garden, terminating the main axis of the composition. The Commission was of the

opinion that the park was the best site for the proposed memorial to President Buchanan, and directed the Secretary to inform Mr. Lawrason Riggs, executor of the estate of Harriet Lane Johnston, that the Officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds is at work, in consultation with the Commission, upon studies as to how the site may be best utilized for the purpose. (See Exhibit A.).

10. TREATMENT OF LANDS ALONG THE UNION STATION PLAZA: The Commission also discussed the subject of the possible treatment of lands adjoining the Union Station Plaza, but came to no decision in the matter.

11. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSION FOR 1913: The Commission formally approved the annual report for the past fiscal year, copies of which had been sent to all the members, and authorized the Secretary to include such of the reports made by the Commission during the year and such photographs for the embellishment of the report as may be desirable. In view of the smallness of this year's appropriation it is the intention, when the report has been forwarded by the President to Congress and ordered printed by that body as a public document, to ask the proper committee to have the report printed in the same excellent manner as last year.

The Commission thereupon left the office for luncheon. Upon returning to the office at 1 o'clock opportunity was given a local photographer to photograph the Commission in session, the members not present to be inserted later on in the groupings, if feasible.

12. NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT, POST OFFICE BUILDING: The Commission was advised later in the afternoon that the Secretary of the Treasury was about to request their advice in connection with the contract for the construction of the Post Office building to be erected in New Haven, Connecticut. Upon communicating with the office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department it was found that time could be saved by inspecting there the plans and estimates for the building and the members proceeded to that office and made the inspection. After careful consideration of the various questions upon which the advice of the Commission was sought, a reply was prepared and sent to the Secretary of the Treasury. (See Exhibit B.).

The Commission thereupon adjourned, at 5 P. M., subject to the call of the Chairman.

Colonel, U. S. Army,
Secretary and Executive Officer.

Approved: Daniel C. French

Chairman.

September 27, 1913.

Lawrason Riggs, Esq.,
Equitable Building,
Baltimore, Maryland.

My dear Mr. Riggs:

At the meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts held on September 25th, the plans for the development and improvement of Meridian Hill Park, referred to in my letter of June 20th, were carefully considered. The Commission came to the conclusion that Meridian Hill Park is the best site for the proposed memorial to President Buchanan, and directed me to inform you that the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds is at work, in consultation with the commission, upon studies as to how the site may be best utilized for the purpose.

You will be further advised when the plans have reached a more advanced stage.

Yours truly,

SPENCER COSBY

Colonel, U. S. Army,

In Charge.

September 30, 1913.

Hon. Charles S. Hamlin,

Acting Secretary of the Treasury.

Sir:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting held on September 25th, carefully considered your letter of that date, requesting their advice in connection with the contract for the construction of the New Haven, Connecticut, Post Office building, and directed me to transmit the following replies to the questions submitted by you:

The Commission feel that any good light and evenly colored marble will be appropriate for the design submitted.

The Commission consider the Pink Tennessee marble the most satisfactory as to permeability, permanency of color and tendency to remain clean.

Norcross Brothers Company and B. A. &. G. N. Williams both have very high standing and are both able to produce a high class of work; but the Commission is not able to give a categorical answer to your question as to facilities and organization.

The comparative merit of the two kinds of materials on purely artistic grounds depends largely on the relation of the building to its surroundings, a matter in regard